



**Office of the Attorney General
Paul G. Summers**

NEWS RELEASE

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**TENNESSEE ATTORNEY GENERAL CAUTIONS CONSUMERS TO BEWARE OF
FLU VACCINE PRICE INCREASES, PHONY VACCINES**

Tennessee Attorney General Paul G. Summers is cautioning the public to be on the alert for unreasonably high prices charged by distributors and/or providers of the flu vaccine and potential phony vaccines being offered as a result of a nationwide shortage. The flu vaccine is in short supply after regulators shut down a British-based manufacturer that usually provides the U.S. flu vaccine.

General Summers' office has spoken with Vanderbilt University Medical Center officials who have expressed concern for inflated prices for the vaccine. In addition, other states have received reports of vaccine price gouging as well as the Center for Disease Control have received reports of possible price gouging of flu vaccines by some of the vaccine distributors or providers.

This week, Kansas and Florida filed suit against Fort Lauderdale-based Meds-Stat, alleging the firm proposed to deliver and sell a vial of five doses of flu vaccine to a Kansas City, Kansas pharmacy for \$900 with the knowledge that the vaccine was to be used in a "nursing home." On Oct. 1, the price for the same vial was listed as \$85. Connecticut is also investigating reports of flu vaccine price-gouging.

The American Society of Health System Pharmacists found in a recent study more than half of the respondents had been offered the vaccine at \$800 for a 10-dose vial. The average is about \$80 to \$90 for hospitals and the average for one dose to a consumer is \$10 to \$20. The organization also expressed concern about the potential for counterfeit vaccines being sold because more than 75 percent of the hospitals it surveyed said they would not have enough flu vaccine to meet recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control. Almost 85 percent of those facilities said they would not buy more vaccines at the inflated prices.

"It is unconscionable that anyone would take advantage of their fellow citizens just to make money in an emergency situation such as we now face, but I know Tennesseans will do the right thing," Attorney General Summers said. "We ask anyone who suspects price-gouging or possible counterfeit vaccines to report it to the appropriate authorities."

Health officials suggest Tennesseans be careful about receiving a flu vaccine from someone

you do not know. If you experience any unexpected side effects, contact your health care provider.

Health care providers should stay vigilant regarding the potential for phony vaccines and only purchase from known vendors. They should also inspect for any irregularities in the appearance or integrity of the vaccine.

Tennesseans may report suspected overpriced vaccines or counterfeit vaccines to the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs at (615) 741-4737 or (800) 342-8385 or online at www.state.tn.us/consumer. Potential counterfeit vaccines should be reported to the local health department, or the Centers for Disease Control at www.cdc.gov.